

REMARKS

Applicants' attorney is appreciative of the interview granted by Examiners Garber and Sene on December 15, 2009. At that interview, Applicants' attorney pointed out reasons why the claimed invention is patentable over the cited references.

Claims 13, 17-19, 26-28 and 31-33 "are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being unpatentable over Lee (U.S. Patent No. 6,406,646) in view of Fukuda et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,485,855)." As two references are involved, and as the Office action clearly states that Lee does not disclose elements of the invention, Applicants believe that a rejection under 35 USC 103(a) was intended.

The invention is directed to a method for constructing a linear and/or punctiform structure on a support comprising applying to the support a flowable, electrically conductive paste-like substance containing a solvent, and after this applying step, contacting the substance with a medium containing a polar molecule. According to Claim 13, the method causes the solvent contained in the substance to be extracted from the edge region, resulting in a hardening and stabilizing of the substance in the edge region. According to Claim 27, the forces of adhesion between the medium and the support are greater than the forces of adhesion between the substance and the support, with the contacting thereby substantially preventing flowing of the substance along the support and detachment of the substance from the support.

The Office action alleges, and Applicants agree, that Lee et al discloses the step of applying a flowable, electrically conductive paste-like substance to a support, but that Lee et al does not specifically disclose a step of contacting the

substance with a medium containing a polar molecule.

Fukuda et al has been cited for that purpose, and the Office action alleges that Fukuda et al discloses forming a conductive paste-like substance (active solid polymer electrolyte membrane), and contacting a conductive paste with a medium containing a polar molecule, causing thereby the solvent contained in the substance to be extracted therefrom in an edge region. Column 2, line 66- column 3, line 27, is cited.

Fukuda et al, however, does not disclose or suggest any such paste-like substance. Fukuda et al is directed specifically to a solid polymer electrolyte membrane used for fuel cells. According to the method disclosed, the solid polymer electrolyte membrane is immersed in a liquid mixture of a solution of a precious metal complex and at least one additive which can be a solvent or surfactant. The ultimate result of the process is the deposition of catalyst particles inside the surface layers of the membrane.

There is nothing in Fukuda et al that discloses or even remotely suggests the use of a flowable, paste-like substance. The disclosed membrane, while formed from a resin, is not a flowable resin, and does not need or attain stabilization by the Fukuda et al process. Moreover, the step of immersing the membrane in the solvent or surfactant mixture is not done for the step of stabilizing a flowable resin, but rather for the purpose of ion exchange. Indeed, there is nothing at all in the Fukuda et al reference which suggests the invention, as the Fukuda et al reference is directed to an entirely different field of endeavor, electrolyte membranes for fuel cells. There is no reason why one of ordinary skill in the art of depositing a paste-like substance on a support would

look to Fukuda et al to solve a problem of stabilization since there is no teaching in the Fukuda et al reference of stabilizing a paste on a support.

Withdrawal of this rejection is requested.

In addition to the above rejection, Claims 16, 22, 30 and 36 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over Lee et al in view of Fukuda et al and Grolemund et al, Claims 23-24 and 37-38 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over Lee et al in view of Fukuda et al and Kleiner, Claims 25 and 40 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over Lee et al in view of Fukuda et al and Kodas et al, and Claims 14, 20-21, 34-35 and 39 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over Lee et al in view of Fukuda et al and Kodas et al. As all of these rejections are based upon the Fukuda et al reference, Fukuda et al has been shown not to be relevant to the claimed invention, withdrawal of all rejections is requested.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants submit that the present application is now in condition for allowance. An early allowance of the application is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



Ira J. Schultz
Registration No. 28666
Attorney for Applicants
(703)837-9600, Ext. 23

Dennison, Schultz & MacDonald
1727 King Street, Suite 105
Alexandria, VA 22314